

COUNTY COUNCIL – 8 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council

1. District Sustainable Community Strategies
(Cabinet, 26 May 2009)

Each district in Oxfordshire has a local strategic partnership (LSP) and has a duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

The county council is a key partner in all five district LSPs with a Cabinet member representative from the council on each LSP.

Four district LSPs have agreed their SCS and are seeking approval from individual partner organisations: Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire.

Cabinet endorsed the district sustainable community strategies and committed its support to delivery of the priorities identified.

3. Oxfordshire County Council Annual Report
(Cabinet, 23 June 2009)

The Cabinet agreed the Annual Report which was intended to provide an overview of the previous year highlighting the council's achievements and successes. The Annual Report used case studies to highlight many of the County Council services, the challenges they face and how Oxfordshire County Council has responded to them.

It was noted that the Annual Report was a working draft. Additional text and detailed appendices would be added including outturn performance data for the year as it became finalised.

It was noted that the report was no longer a policy framework document so would not go to Council for approval. The report would be available on the Council web site.

4. Performance Management: 4th Quarter Progress Report against Priorities and Targets.
(Cabinet, 23 June 2009)

Cabinet noted a performance management report on the Council's Balanced Scorecard that detailed progress against priorities and targets as at Quarter Four 2008/09. The report showed over 80% of all indicators at or near to target. The indicators in the finance quadrant were at or above target at year end.

5. Partnership Governance

(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)

Cabinet considered the findings of a review of the governance arrangements of the partnerships responsible for delivery of the targets in the Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan that had been commissioned by the Public Service Board. Cabinet agreed the governance principles and membership.

6. Implementing the Manifesto Pledges

(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)

Cabinet agreed a report that set out the way in which the election manifesto pledges made would be taken forward by the new administration in the short and medium term.

7. Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

(Cabinet, 21 April 2009)

Cabinet noted the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (AAIL) which drew on the most recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council for 2007/08 and from any inspections undertaken since the last Annual Audit and Inspection.

Tribute was paid to the work of internal audit and Cabinet recorded their thanks for their efforts.

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

8. Establishment Review

(Cabinet, 23 June 2009)

Cabinet noted a report that gave an update on activity since the implementation of the Establishment Review and associated Recruitment Approval process on 1 August 2005. Details of the agreed establishment figure at 31 March 2009 in terms of Full Time Equivalents was provided, together with the detailed staffing position at 31 March 2009. The report also contained information on grant funded posts and those vacancies which are being covered by agency staff and at what cost.

Cabinet Member: Finance & Property

9. Provisional 2008/09 Revenue and Capital Outturn

(Cabinet, 23 June 2009)

Cabinet considered the 2008/09 provisional revenue and capital outturn and identified variations of actual spend against budgets. The report focused on the year end balance sheet position including the level of general balances

and reserves. The report also included proposals for the allocation of revenue carry forwards in 2009/10.

The Council's year end position for 2008/09 showed a revenue underspend of -£2.119m, a capital underspend of -£3.679m and general balances of £20.187m.

Cabinet noted the provisional revenue and capital outturn; approved the carry-forwards and virements set out in the report; approved changes to balances; agreed that the surplus in the On-Street Parking Account at the end of the 2008/09 financial year, so far as not applied to particular eligible purposes in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, be carried forward in the account to the 2009/10 financial year; approved the creation of new reserves and agreed the transfer of £1.187m from balances to a new reserve to fund future efficiency savings.

10. Financial Monitoring *(Cabinet, 23 June 2009)*

The Cabinet has considered two financial monitoring reports. The report to the meeting on 23 June covered the period to 30 April 2009 and the report to the meeting on 21 July covered the period to 31 May 2009.

At the June Cabinet meeting, the Cabinet approved the requests to release the amounts carried forward from 2007/08 from balances; approved virement requests and agreed to freeze fees for Adult Learning classes at 2008/09 levels for the 2009/10 academic year.

At the July meeting, it was reported that the in-year overspend for the Directorates was forecast to be £2.743m.

The year-end forecast of general balances showed a forecast of £14.326m. After taking into account the forecast Directorate outturn, the consolidated revenue balances forecast was £11.538m.

Cabinet noted the report, approved virements and supplementary estimates as set out in the report and agreed that Directors prepare proposals for addressing the new savings targets, referred to in part 4 of the report.

11. Treasury Management Outturn *(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)*

Cabinet noted a report that set out the Council's Treasury Management Outturn financial position for the 2008/09 financial year.

The Council's external debt increased from £392.38m on 1 April 2008 to £402.38m on 31 March 2009. All new long-term debt was arranged through the Public Works Loans Board. The weighted average rate of interest paid on long-term debt during 2008/09 was 4.9578%.

Security and liquidity of cash was prioritised over returns and the council adopted a cautious approach to lending to financial institutions, temporarily suspending those on ratings watch negative from the lending list. The council also imposed a maximum lending limit of 3 months in the latter half of the financial year.

The council achieved an in-house deposit return of 5.16% and continued to use 2 external fund managers, Investec and Scottish Widows Investment Partnership (SWIP). Investec earned an average return of 7.78% and SWIP 5.43%.

The Strategic Measures interest on balances outturn was £7.516m compared to a budget of £4.935m. The additional net interest earned was as a result of higher temporary cash balances, due to capital programme slippage and higher than budgeted interest received as a result of the 'credit crunch'.

Cabinet Member: Schools Improvement

12. Strategic Review of Funding Formula for Schools

(Cabinet, 26 May 2009)

Cabinet agreed that a review should proceed on the basis outlined in the report.

13. The Cooper School, Bicester – Sixth Form Proposals

(Cabinet, 26 May 2009)

Cabinet considered a report detailing the response to formal proposals to expand the age range from 11-16 years to 11-18 years and enlarge The Cooper School, Bicester. The notice was published by the Authority on 26 March 2009 and expired following 4 weeks of formal consultation on 24 April 2009.

The proposed implementation date for the proposal was 1 September 2011.

Cabinet agreed the proposals.

14. Madley Brook Primary School

(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)

Cabinet considered a proposal to increase the admission number for Madley Brook Primary School from 30 to 45, which had been the subject of an informal consultation in Witney. Approval was given to proceed with the publications of a statutory notice for the expansion of the school.

15. Relationship between Leadership and Improving Attainment in Schools

(Cabinet, 21 April 2009)

The Cabinet considered a report by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee setting out the findings of a review that considered whether anything specific could be done to raise attainment in Oxfordshire's schools to the level that is expected of them. The report (the first of four) addressed the subject of how the leadership of a school, including the Governing Body, headteacher, deputy head, supporting management team and the Governing Body, could affect attainment levels. The Cabinet also considered the response of the Cabinet Member for School's Improvement as set out in the schedule of addenda.

Cabinet Member: Transport

16. Witney - Cogges Link Road - Revised Project Appraisal to Fund Scheme to Completion

(Cabinet, 26 May 2009)

Cabinet agreed a revised project appraisal for the scheme following planning approval.

17. Transform Oxford – Queen Street – Project Appraisal

(Cabinet, 26 May 2009)

Oxfordshire County Council launched plans to transform the centre of Oxford's transport and pedestrian experience on 20 October 2008. Included in Stage 1 of these plans was an improvement scheme for Queen Street.

Cabinet gave approval to the financial appraisal for the Queen Street project.

Cabinet Member: Growth & Infrastructure

18. Developer Contributions to Service Infrastructure

(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)

Cabinet noted a report that summarised the developer contributions secured by the county council through the planning process for 2008/09, and identified the financial contributions negotiated, received and spent throughout the year.

The report showed that 102 planning obligations were completed in 2008/09 securing the largest annual financial contributions to the county council for future infrastructure provision. The total secured was £72.69M. The report showed the actual amount of contributions received in the year to be £5.611M with £5.884M expended.

19. Department of Communities and Local Government Consultation on Eco-Towns: North West Bicester and Financial Viability Study of the Eco-Towns Programme

(Cabinet, 21 April 2009)

Cabinet considered a report that commented on the NW Bicester proposal and also commented on financial and viability work for the eco-towns programme that was undertaken by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) and others for CLG.

Cabinet endorsed the response set out in the report and delegated the Head of Sustainable Development in consultation with the Leader of the Council and relevant Cabinet Member to make any further detailed comments for submission to the Secretary of State.

20. Highways Adoption – Business Process Review and Informal Agency arrangements with Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District council

(Cabinet, 21 April 2009)

Cabinet considered a report highlighting one of the key recommendations from the Business Process Review (BPR) of the Council's Highway Adoption function, which was completed at the end of 2008. This related to the way in which work in this area was managed and undertaken by the County Council and an end brought to the informal agency arrangements with Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils with regard to some aspects of this work, notably that covered by Section 38 of the Highways Act (Adoption by agreement with developer).

Cabinet agreed to give formal notice to Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils to end the present arrangements for managing and undertaking Highway Adoption functions and to transfer those responsibilities to the County Council with details agreed by the Head of Transport in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

21. Planning for Spaces for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (Partial Review of the South East Plan)

(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)

Cabinet agreed a response to Government consultation on the number of new pitches that each local authority should provide by 2016 for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) as recommended to it by the former South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) as a partial review of The South East Plan (adopted May 2009).

Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families

22. Safeguarding and Child Protection Services in Oxfordshire: an Update following Lord Laming's Review
(Cabinet, 21 July 2009)

Cabinet considered a summary report of the findings of Lord Laming's review of Safeguarding and Child Protection services, commissioned following the death in Haringey, in 2007, of Baby Peter.

Cabinet noted the increased County Council investment and approved the proposed framework for providing Quality Assurance of the Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection activity